DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 150 574 CS 003 955

AUTHOR Hanson, Paula Z.; Williamson, Leon E.
TITLE The Newspaper and Reading Instruction for Secondary EMR Students.
PUB DATE [77]
NOTE 16p.; Research prepared at New Mexico State University

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educable Mentally Handicapped; Exceptional Child Education; High Interest Low Vocabulary Books; *Instructional Materials; *Learning Activities; *Newspapers; Periodicals; Reading Instruction; Reading Materials; *Reading Research; *Reading Skills; Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the use of newspapers, magazines, and high interest/low vocabulary materials in teaching reading skills to secondary educable mentally retarded (EMR) students. Among the topics it considers are the following: the importance of teaching reading to EMR students through approaches that research indicates are effective, reading skills that EMR students should be taught, the advantages of teaching reading skills to EMR students through the use of materials they will encounter in their adult lives, skills that can be taught through use of the newspaper and newspaper "want ads" and activities for using "want ads" to teach reading skills, skills that can be taught through the use of magazines and some activities that can aid in developing those skills, and activities to be used in conjunction with high interest/low vocabulary materials. (GW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED150574

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The Newspaper and Reading Instruction for Secondary EMR Students

Paula Z. Hanson

Gadsden School District

Anthony, New Mexico

Leon E. Williamson

Department of Educational Specialties

New Mexico State University

Las Cruces, New Mexico

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Paula Z. Hanson

Leon E. Williamson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Running head: Newspaper and Reading Instruction for Secondary EMR Students

CS003955

The Newspaper and Reading Instruction for Secondary EMR Students

Introduction

Methods of teaching reading to retarded students should be those instructional approaches which research indicates are more effective. Some researchers (Sidman and Cresson, 1973; Bursuk, 1971; Goodman, 1972) have supported the contention that some approaches are more efficacious than others. Although this idea contradicts Artley's (1973) contention that the teacher is the variable, there is validity to the idea that instructional approach is important when teaching retarded readers. Retarded readers may be unable to learn to read adequately when taught by a particular method because emotional barriers are responsible for the ineffectiveness of that method. An alternative method may be necessary to allow the student a new chance at experiencing success.

Sidman and Cresson (1973) believe research suggests teaching procedures, rather than individual deficiencies, have set the limiting conditions in learning to read. That is, if the proper methods were employed, then most students, even those who are severely retarded, should be able to learn to read at least at a minimal level. Bursuk (1971) supports this conclusion. She believes if a student is still a retarded reader when he reaches high school, then an alternative teaching technique is in order.

Neville and Vandever (1973) addressed the problem of synthetic versus analytic reading instruction. Synthetic teaching methods teach phoneme-grapheme correspondence and then blend these parts into whole words; analytic methods teach whole words initially and then present phonemic components for analysis. They become convinced that synthetic

teaching methods enable the child to develop transfer skills, even to inconsistent words, thus promoting independent word attack skills. The explanation for the transfer of skills to inconsistent words may be that the pupil applies word attack skills for consistent words and comes up with an approximation of the word which could then be recognized because of his previous language experience.

Tyler (1974) investigated the question of teaching mildly retarded readers in accordance with perceptual strengths and weaknesses and failed to support the necessity for instruction differentiated by modality. Neither an auditory nor visual approach was found to be superior. He stated that retardates are generally better at visual skills than auditory skills. However, he questioned the efficacy of reading instruction which is matched solely to modality preferences of retarded pupils. He doubts the feasibility of modality matching of instruction because he feels no reading approach can be "modality pure" due to the auditory, visual and kinesthetic qualities of reading.

It is also important to note that some investigators (Apffel, et. al., 1975) believe retarded students are less successful in learning to read than they potentially could be because there is much stereotyping in regard to what EMR pupils can accomplish. It is suggested that program decisions be based on the student's demonstrated rate of progress in learning to read, rather than on assumed ability based on a categorical label. However, it is recognized that EMR students do have a lower functioning level than normal students and therefore reading skills taught to these students will differ from those taught to normal students.

Stephens (in Johnson and Kress, 1967) suggests in secondary grading there should be concern for the higher thought processes involved in

advanced reading. Reading should be viewed as a sequence of hierarchal abilities with achievement at one stage implying successful performance at preceding stages. In reading, reading to learn rather than learning to read should be emphasized. Since advanced readers are usually abstract readers who classify words and are able to see implied ideas, teachers of EMR students should devise activities to teach these skills of classifying words and seeing implied ideas.

Skills for the EMR Pupil

In a search of the literature, several lists of reading skills to be taught to EMR students are discovered. The lists were compiled by school districts and research studies (Hurley, 1975; Office of the Santa Cruz Superintendent of Schools, 1973). Following is a compilation of the skills found in the literature.

1. Researches given topic; locates books in library using card catalogue.
2. Reads and interprets traffic regulations, signs, labels and instructions.
3. Reads and interprets simple diagrams.
4. Identifies cause-effect relationships directly stated in sentences.
5. Identifies cause-effect relationships implied in sentences.
6. Identifies main ideas implied in paragraphs and stories.
7. Identifies main ideas directly stated in paragraphs and stories.
8. Identifies details in stories.
9. Predicts outcomes and actions.
10. Discriminates between fact and fiction and fact and opinion.

11. Interprets similes, idioms, hyperboles, metaphors and personification.
12. Reads aloud in meaningful phrases, with appropriate expression; uses punctuation as a guide.
13. Adjusts reading rate to type of material, dificulty, purpose, familiarity with subject.
14. Reads stories and books to others.
15. Follows written instructions in sequence to complete an activity.
16. Uses independent reading to initiate activities.
17. Reads at average rate for peer group.

Materials and Activities

The objective of the secondary special education teacher should be to accomplish the main objective of reading, which is to gain meaning from the printed word, not to develop isolated reading skills (Hirshoren, et. al., 1974). That is, students may be deficient in certain reading skills and still be able to read with understanding. When this is the case, instruction time can be better spent elsewhere.

A major problem in the education of EMR students is their lack of ability to transfer previously learned information to a new situation. To minimize the need for transfer, reading skills should be taught in a reading situation (Hall, 1973) and not in isolation (Goodman, 1975). When a student indicates a need through his performance, for specific skill development, then instruction should take place within the reading context.

Materials which the students will encounter in their adult life, rather than commercially produced or "slick" materials should be utilized. This will inhibit the loss of transfer. It will also aid the EMR in

feeling comfortable and successful with those materials he will meet in his everyday environment. Success with these materials will develop in the EMR a feeling of accomplishment and familiarity with materials that previously provided only frustration, avoidance and failure.

The materials which can be utilized are numerous and varied. They range from newspapers and magazines to job application. The newspaper is often suggested (Hirshoren, et. al., 1974; Cheynely, 1971) as a good medium through which teaching reading skills can be accomplished. The following skills can be taught through the newspaper.

1. Using an index.
2. Developing vocabulary.
3. Retelling, summarizing.
4. Developing critical reading: who? what? where? why? how?
5. Understanding abbreviations.
6. Predicting outcomes.
7. Classifying things and ideas.
8. Comparing and contrasting.
9. Identifying fact versus opinion.
10. Seeing cause and effect relationships.
11. Understanding symbols.
12. Word analysis.

The newspaper can also be used in a sustained silent reading program. Since its content changes daily it never loses its appeal. Group discussion centered around current events is motivated through the use of the newspaper. It has been noted in the research (Goodman, 1975; Hall and Ribovich, 1973) that language and vocabulary development are correlated with reading achievement. Therefore, classroom time should be devoted to those activities which will improve these areas.

A plethora of oral reading material is found in the newspaper, especially in the sports and human interest sections. Although the reading level of most newspapers will be above the reading level of the students, they will profit from the practice and the exposure to new words. This exposure provides opportunities for the practice of word attack skills, use of context clues and vocabulary development.

The want ad section of the newspaper can also be utilized very effectively to teach and reinforce reading skills. Some skills which can be taught are:

1. Phonic Skills
    a. Identification of consonants and vowels.
    b. Vowel sounds such as oo in look, oi in boil, er as in her.
    c. Initial and final consonant.
    d. Silent letters such as k in know, w in write.
2. Structural Analysis Skills
    a. Base word identification, e.g., jumping, catches.
    b. Prefixes such as un in unemployment.
    c. Suffixes such as er in teacher, ment in unemployment.
    d. Inflections: plurality: -s, -es, tense: -ed, -s, possessives: 's, s'.
    e. Syllabication: dividing words into the four basic syllabic units: 1) Vowel, 2) Vowel-Consonant, 3) Consonant Vowel, 4) Consonant-Vowel-Consonent.
3. Vocabulary development: synonyms, antonyms, multiple meanings, unfamiliar words

Some activities which can be developed around the want ads to teach these skills are:

1. Phonics Activities

   a. Writing own abbreviations for words by leaving out all vowels, e.g., bookkeeper = bkkpr.

   b. Writing own abbreviations, also leaving out silent letters, e.g., bookkeeper = bkpr.

   c. Identifying words with same written patterns, e.g., C-V-V-C: town, down; C-V-V-C: teach, coat, seed, maid, deceive; C-V-V-C: book, took, choose, shoot.

2. Structural Analysis Activities

   a. Finding plural words in the want ads: those that add s, those that add es. Other plurals: men, women, children, sheep, deer.

   b. Separating base words from inflections, e.g., wanted = want + ed, walks = walk + s, friends = friend + s.

   c. Underlining the prefixes found in a column such as de - in detain, inter - in intermission, pre - in prevent, ob - in object, of - in offer, dis - in dissatisfied.

   d. Circling all the suffixes found on a page.

   e. Identifying pronunciation units by dividing multisyllabic words, e.g., bed/room, a/do/be. The four basic units are: 1) Vowel, 2) Vowel-Consonant, 3) Consonant-Vowel, 4) Consonant-Vowel-Consonant.

3. Vocabulary Development Activities

   a. Keeping a dictionary of new words such as employment, female, mechanic.

   b. Using context clues to obtain the meanings of unfamiliar words.

   c. Rewriting ads, using synonyms for words used in the actual ad.

Another reading material that is found in the students' environment and can be utilized in a number of ways to meet a number of objectives is the magazine. It is a good medium because it has built-in motivation due to "adult" appearance, visual appeal, easy accessibility in the students' environment and the current nature of the subjects reported on.

Skills which can be taught through the medium of the magazine include:

1. Structural Analysis Skills
   a. Compound words, such as baseball, homerun.
   b. Contractions, such as I'm, you're.
   c. Possessive forms, such as mine, his, its.
   d. Homonyms, such as lead - led, bee - be.
2. Comprehension Skills
   a. Listening skills.
   b. Remembering details.
   c. Using picture clues.
   d. Using punctuation as a guide to meaning.
   e. Reading for sequence of ev ts.
   f. Finding the main idea.
   g. Classification.
3. Study Skills
   a. Using table of contents and index.
   b. Reading maps, charts, graphs, etc.
   c. Fact versus opinion.
   d. Summarizing.

Activities which can aid in developing the above skills are:

1. Structural Analysis Skills Activities
   a. Finding all compound words on a page and breaking them apart, e.g., baseball = base + ball.

b. Rewriting words as contractions, e.g., have not = haven't.

c. Circling possessive forms on a page.

d. Listing words and having students find the homonyms for those words on assigned pages.

2. Comprehension Activities

a. Have students recall details from an article that was read aloud.

b. Anticipate a news story from clues given in an accompanying picture; have students discuss the picture, make inferences based on the picture and then read the story to check their guesses.

c. Encourage reading in meaningful phrases and encourage appropriate regard for punctuation through oral reading of articles of interest to the students.

d. Have students read an article and then (1) unscramble the sequence of events listed for them or (2) recall the sequence of events.

e. Find the main idea of a paragraph; find the main idea of a news article.

f. Make collages on a specific subject from pictures taken from magazines; the subjects can be people, pets, city life, desert scenes, houses or any subject of interest to the students.

g. Ask questions about material read which require the recall of details.

h. Since the reading level is often above the student's reading level, he is exposed to new words which he can learn from context, class discussion or the dictionary.

3. Study Skill Activities

   a. Use the table of contents to locate page numbers for different articles.

   b. In reading an article, have the students point out facts and opinions; discuss the difference between facts and opinion.

   c. Rewrite articles in own words.

Several news publications written for the classroom use with high interest and low vocabulary can be utilized to teach reading in much the same manner as newspapers and magazines. Activities such as crossword puzzles, chart reading, vocabulary development, word attack skill development, riddles and other activities are included by the publisher. These periodicals are especially useful in providing material for oral reading. Vocabulary development, sequencing and other comprehension skills can easily be reinforced using these materials and others like them.

Several paperback book series written with high interest and low vocabulary can be effectively utilized to reach such objectives as reading for pleasure and personal enjoyment, reading for literal meaning and developing interpretive skills. Some paperback series which have been used with success are the Raceway Paperback Series by Young Readers Press, Inc., Pal Paperbacks by Xerox Educational Publications and Turning Point by Educational Challenge. Perhaps, the greatest use for these books is in developing reading for personal enjoyment. They have been read more than anything in the classroom (besides the newspaper) and enjoyed tremendously. This seems to be related to the low reading level but high interest. In the words of one student, "They're the only books I can read and still remember what I read when I get to the end."

Skills and activities similar to those using newspapers and magazines can be developed through this medium. Other activities can be developed

to increase skills in the areas of comprehension, study, self-directed reading, interpretation and creativity. Some of these are listed here:

1. Implied ideas can be recognized and discussed.
2. Character traits can be identified; characters can be contrasted; empathy for characters can be developed.
3. The students can begin to learn to read with expression.
4. Independent reading habits can be fostered.
5. Event sequencing can be reinforced by having the student recall the sequence of events.
6. The student can be aided in seeing cause and effect relationships.
7. Humor, sorrow and other human emotions can be experienced vicariously by the reader.
8. Events from selected stories can be dramatized.
9. Pro and con positions about an event or character can be taken and defended.
10. Creative writing can be begun by allowing the students to rewrite the story ending.
11. Reading comprehension skills can be developed by asking questions about the stories which cover both implied and literal meaning.

Other "found" materials which can be utilized in much the same way as newspapers, paperbacks and magazines to teach reading skills and survival sight words are job application blanks, social security applications, Department of Motor Vehicles Driving Manuals, telephone books, sales catalogues, applications for credit, owner's manuals and instructional manuals. However, due to space considerations, specific activities for utilizing these media will not be discussed.

The reader should not take this as the final answer in activities and materials for teaching secondary EMR students. Rather, it should be viewed as a starting point from which to look for other materials and develop other activities. It should be viewed as a guide for this search and development since the suggestions are based in research and actual practice.

References

Apffel, James, et. al., "Developmental Reading for Moderately Retarded Children," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, December 1975, p. 229.

Artley, A. Sterl, "The Teacher Variable in the Teaching of Reading" in Eldon Ekwall, Psychological Factors in the Teaching of Reading, Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1973.

Bursuk, Laura Z., "Sensory Mode of Lesson Presentation as a Factor in Reading Comprehension Improvement in Adolescent Retarded Readers," ERIC, 1971.

Cheynely, A. G., Teaching Reading Skills Through the Newspaper, Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1971.

Goodman, Kenneth S., "Do You Have to be Smart to Read?, Do You Have to Read to be Smart?," The Reading Teacher, April 1975.

Goodman, Kenneth S., "Reading: The Key is in Children's Language," The Reading Teacher, March 1972, p. 505.

Hall, M. and J. Ribovich, "Teaching Reading in Reading Situations," The Reading Teacher, November 1973, p. 163.

Hirshoren, Alfred, Et. al, "Classified Ads as Reading Material for the Educable Mentally Retarded," Exceptional Children, September 1974, p. 45.

Hurley, Oliver, "Reading Skills vis-a-vis the EMR," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, February 1975, p. 10.

Neville, Donald R. and Thomas R. Vandever, "Decoding as a Result of Synthetic and Analytic Presentation for Retarded and Non-Retarded Children," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, March 1973, p. 533.

Office of Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools, Behavioral Progressions Chart, Palo Alto, California: VORT Corporation, 1973.

Sidman, Murray and Osborne Cresson, Jr., "Reading and Crossmodal Transfer of Stimulus Equivalences in Severe Retardation," American Jouranl of Mental Retardation, March 1973, p. 515.

Stephens, W. B., "Reading for the Slow Learner and Mentally Retarded," in M.S. Johnson and R. A. Kress (Eds.), Developmental Reading: Diagnostic Teacing, Proceedings of the 1967 Annual Reading Institute, Temple University.

Tyler, James Larry, "Modality Preference and Reading Task Performance Among the Mildly Retarded," Training School Bulletin, February 1974, p. 205.